oliday events and celebrations can be exciting times for family and friends to get together.

But, get-togethers with family and friends can turn into tragedies when people are killed or injured in traffic crashes.

As the holiday season is approaching, motorists need to be mindful of actions that will make their holiday travel safer. Drivers can protect themselves and their passengers by following these holiday travel rules.

- Before you start your trip, make sure your vehicle is tuned up and in good shape for travel.
   This is especially important for winter driving conditions.
  - Restrain yourself and your passengers properly in seat belts and car safety seats.

    Remember, the rear seat is the safest place for children of any age to ride.
    - Be flexible in setting your travel plans. Leave early if you can to avoid the peak traffic
      hours. If snow is predicted during the time you plan to travel, change your
      schedule. It is better to reschedule your get-together than to risk the lives of traveling
      family or friends.
      - Stay fresh and alert when driving. Take plenty of breaks and do not push yourself to meet an unrealistic schedule. If you get tired, pull off the road into a rest area or business, get out of the car for some fresh air, buy something to refresh you, or just relax until you feel revived. If that doesn't work, find a motel or campground where you can spend the night. Forty-one percent of fatal traffic accidents are single vehicle crashes. These crashes most often occur during the late night/early morning hours and the late afternoon hours to drivers who are tired, have consumed alcohol, or both.
        - **Keep your speed down.** Give yourself plenty of time and distance to react to the traffic around you. Let impatient and aggressive drivers pass you or go through the intersection ahead of you so that you control the situation.
          - Do not pass if you cannot see enough clear road to pass safely.
            - If there will be drinking at your holiday get-together, choose a designated driver who will remain alcohol free.
              - Because driving requires your full attention, pull off the road if you have to use your cellular phone.

tips for the holidays

For additional safety tips for traveling in winter conditions, click on winter driving tips.